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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2691
INFO RUCNDSC/DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE PRIORITY 6994
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 5261
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 5274

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000128

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2020
TAGS: [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [KNNP](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA PRESSURES PAKISTAN ON CONFERENCE ON
DISARMAMENT

REF: SECSTATE 13698

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Edgard D. Kagan for reasons 1.4(b)(d)

Summary

1. (C/NF) Australia supports U.S. goals for the upcoming Conference on Disarmament (CD). Officials have already begun to pressure Pakistan to support a new Program of Work (POW) so that discussions can begin on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Australia is worried that beginning informal negotiations on a FMCT might anger Pakistan and China in advance of the NPT Review Conference. Still, if such discussions were to move forward Australia could be counted on to participate.

Strong Support

2. (C/NF) Australia understands and supports the U.S. goals for the CD. Anne Craig of the Arms Control and Counter-Proliferation Branch at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) says her government's position is consistent with that of the United States. She agreed that the 2009 Program of Work was the proper starting point for negotiations and that it is important to build momentum in advance of the NPT Review Conference.

3. (C/NF) Craig called Pakistan's continued blockage of a POW "unreasonable." She said that Australia has already begun to pressure Pakistan at high levels to reconsider their position. Last week, Australia held its annual senior officials talks with Pakistan. First Assistant Secretary Deborah Stokes of the DFAT's Middle East Division raised the issue, but the response was non-committal. Given this recent engagement, Australia will not pass this message through a formal demarche, but will continue to pressure Pakistan on this issue.

Worried About Informal Talks

4. (C/NF) Craig had reservations about beginning informal negotiations on an FMCT prior to reaching agreement on a Program of Work. While she acknowledged that it was important to show some progress on the FMCT, Craig worries that holding informal negotiations outside of the CD framework could be counter-productive. With the NPT Review Conference coming up, Australia is very concerned about angering Pakistan and China and worries that informal FMCT negotiations run the risk of doing just that. Craig felt that any momentum gained through FMCT negotiations would be outweighed but alienating these two key countries.

Comment

15. (C/NF) The current government is eager to work with the United States on nonproliferation and disarmament. Despite its reservations, Australia will not give up its place at the table in any FMCT negotiations. Should informal negotiations be held outside of the CD structure, Australia will be an active and willing participant in any such discussions.

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